

# Career path for doctors in Wales



Working in medicine is an exciting, challenging and dynamic career path, with over 60 specialties to choose from. Roles range from a GP based in the community, a hospital doctor, a geneticist in a lab, locum doctors, public health consultants, a lecturer teaching students and research posts, to working in the armed forces or police force.

Cymru Wales

## There are a number of different routes to becoming a doctor in Wales:

- Straight from school or a gap year into a 5 year undergraduate medical degree
- A degree + 5 year undergraduate medical degree
- A degree + 4 year Graduate Entry Programme (Swansea University Medical School)
- Alternative route – Medical sciences / Medical Pharmacology degree + 4 year undergraduate medical degree

### Undergraduate medical degree, at least 5 years

- Undergraduate course studied at university (Cardiff University School of Medicine, UCAS code A100) and in hospitals and general practices across Wales
- This involves basic medical sciences, core learning and practical clinical tasks
- Initial exposure to different clinical specialties and early patient contact
- Assessments, depending on course type, including practical and written exams, project work and presenting to groups

Cardiff University School of Medicine also offers a 6 year 'Medicine with a preliminary year' course (UCAS code A104). This is for high-achieving students not studying both Chemistry and Biology at A level.

### Graduate Entry Programme, 4 years

The MB BCH Graduate Entry Medicine (UCAS code A101) is an innovative, 4-year accelerated medical degree at Swansea University, open to those who have achieved a first or upper second class honours degree, a lower second class plus a postgraduate masters or other higher degree, or a merit or distinction in an integrated undergraduate masters degree.

### Alternative route, 7 Years

- Medical Sciences/Medical Pharmacology degree, 3 years**
- Cardiff University BSc Medical Pharmacology (UCAS code B210)
  - Cardiff University BSc Biomedical Science (UCAS code BC97)
  - Bangor University Medical Sciences BMedSci (UCAS code B100)
  - University of South Wales BSc Medical Sciences (UCAS code B901)



**Undergraduate medical degree, + 4 year**

The undergraduate medical degree here is 4 years, as high achieving graduates of the Medical Sciences/Medical Pharmacology degree courses can be considered for entry into Year 2 of Cardiff University School of Medicine's 5 year undergraduate course (UCAS code A100).



#### Did you know

Doctors are known as 'junior doctors' when they leave medical school and enter foundation training? They retain this title throughout their specialty training, which can take up to 8 years.

Education continues to be a key role for all doctors throughout their careers.

## Foundation Training, 2 years

# F1



### Foundation Year 1, 1 year

- Provisional registration gained from the General Medical Council (GMC)
- This year helps newly qualified graduates to build on knowledge and skills gained at medical school
- Rotations in different specialties
- Option to take an academic foundation programme and develop teaching/research skills
- Full GMC registration after F1 year has been successfully completed



# F2



### Foundation Year 2, 1 year

- Continue with rotations, with exposure to a range of different working environments including community-based care
- By the end of the F2 year, doctors must demonstrate high levels of skill and competency in managing acutely ill patients, communication and team work
- Foundation Achievement of Competence Document (FACD) is awarded, allowing doctors to apply for Specialty Training Programmes



## Specialty training, 3-8 years

- On successful completion of the foundation programme, doctors continue training in either hospital specialty training or in other specialty training, such as general practice
- There are over 60 different specialties to choose from and the specialty chosen will determine the length of this training before becoming a fully qualified specialist
- This period involves in-depth learning and practise in advanced areas, along with working more autonomously, with continued supervision from senior doctors
- Many enter 'themed' specialty areas to gain expertise, training and experience in a broad area before embarking on a subspecialty
- Doctors complete workplace assessments throughout training and each specialty requires different professional exams

- Some doctors choose a programme which allows them to integrate a PhD or other higher degree, alongside their clinical training. This means the length of training is extended to allow for the addition of an academic research study
- A Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT) is awarded once the competencies required in a specialty programme are completed, and this allows entry to the GMC specialist register or GP register
- Whilst the medical career pathway looks quite structured, there are opportunities to take time out to undertake research in specialty training and to take career breaks
- Once on the specialist register, doctors can apply for consultant posts or GP posts



### Consultant

A consultant is a doctor fully trained in their specific specialty, who has overall responsibility for the care of patients, most often but not always in a hospital.

### GP

A GP is fully trained in the specialty of family medicine and complex chronic disease, and has overall responsibility for the management of patient care outside of hospitals, referring for specialist treatment if necessary.

### SAS doctors

SAS doctors (Staff Grade, Associate Specialist and Specialty Doctors) work across primary, secondary and community hospital care. They will have completed training in a specialty to a specific level and will work in an NHS team to deliver clinical services alongside consultants and doctors in training.

**13**  
years  
minimum

Length  
of training

**10**  
years  
minimum

Length  
of training

#### Training length varies due to the length and breadth of the role

SAS doctors have at least four years postgraduate experience, two of which are in their chosen specialty. Doctors can move into these posts at various levels of experience and seniority, as well as gaining experience and promotion within the grade itself. The path can be longer if following an academic or non-linear pathway or for those working less than full time.